GDI

**Global
Disinformation
Index**

Disinformation
Risk Assessment:
The Online News
Market in the
Philippines

The Global Disinformation Index is a not-for-profit organisation that operates on the three principles of neutrality, independence and transparency. Our vision is a world free from disinformation and its harms. Our mission is to catalyse industry and government to defund disinformation. We provide disinformation risk ratings of the world's news media sites. For more information, visit www.disinformationindex.org.

The Dr. Andrew L. Tan Data Science Institute (ALTDSI) is an interdisciplinary research institute at De La Salle University that aims to advance global knowledge and innovations in data science, artificial intelligence, and machine learning. In providing data curation and data-driven solutions, we help the industry, governments, and civic organisations in critical decision-making, in providing services, and in inspiring communities to improve their quality of life through cutting-edge research, educational programs, and state-of-the-art infrastructure. For more information, please visit https://altdsi.dlsu.edu.ph.

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Executive summary

Since the news business has expanded to the online world, transformations in news production and distribution have exposed the industry to new disinformation risks.

News websites have financial incentives to spread disinformation in order to increase their online traffic and, ultimately, their advertising revenue. Meanwhile, the dissemination of disinformation has disruptive and impactful consequences. The narratives surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic are a recent – and deadly – example. By disrupting society's shared sense of accepted facts, these narratives undermine public health, safety and government responses.

To combat ad-funded disinformation, the Global Disinformation Index (GDI) deploys its assessment framework to rate news domains' risk of disinforming their readers. These independent, trusted and neutral ratings are used by advertisers, ad tech companies and platforms to redirect their online ad spending, in line with their brand safety and disinformation risk mitigation strategies.

GDI defines disinformation as 'adversarial narratives that create real world harm', and the GDI risk rating provides information about a range of indicators related to the risk that a given news website will disinform its readers by spreading these adversarial narratives. These indicators are grouped under the index's **Content** and **Operations pillars**, which respectively measure the quality and reliability of a site's content and its operational and editorial integrity.[1] A site's overall risk rating is based on that site's aggregated score across all the indicators, and ranges from zero (maximum risk level) to 100 (minimum risk level).

The GDI risk rating methodology is not an attempt to identify and label disinformation sites or trustworthy news sites. Rather, GDI's approach is based on the idea that a combined set of indicators can reflect a site's overall risk of carrying disinformation. The ratings should be seen as offering initial insights into the Philippine media market and its overall levels of disinformation risk, along with the opportunities and challenges the sites face in mitigating disinformation risks.

The following report presents the findings pertaining to disinformation risks for the media market in the Philippines, based on a study of 35 news domains. These findings are the result of the research led by the GDI with De La Salle University's Dr. Andrew L. Tan Data Science Institute, in July through November of 2022. All sites included in the report were informed of their individual scores and risk ratings, to allow for engagement and feedback.

The need for a trustworthy, independent rating of disinformation risk is pressing. This risk-rating framework for the Philippines will provide crucial information to policymakers, news websites and civil society, enabling key decision-makers to stem the tide of money that incentivises and sustains disinformation. Moreover, the results of the current study will contribute to GDI's mission to disrupt the business model of disinformation, by being earmarked for sharing with ad tech industry stakeholders and other parties acting to defund disinformation.

Key findings: the Philippines

In reviewing the media landscape for the Philippines, our assessment found that:

The majority of the domains in our sample have a medium to high risk of disinforming online users.

- Thirteen (13) sites, or 37% of the sample, present a medium disinformation risk rating.

- A total of ten (10) sites scored in the minimum to low risk range, with only one (1) domain garnering a minimum risk rating.

- The remaining twelve (12) sites received high risk ratings.

- The country's average risk rating is 55.32, which translates to a moderate level of risk.

Overall, the disinformation risk of the sites in our sample does not stem entirely from the quality of the content published. Rather, the main factor that pulled the scores down — and the disinformation risk up — were operational shortcomings.

- Most domains performed well on the **Content pillar**, with all but one site scoring above 70 out of 100. The **Content** rating ranges from 68 to 93.

- In terms of individual **Content** indicators, Philippines news sites generally performed well except when it came to the *Common coverage* and *Lede present* indicators.

- In contrast, 80% (28 out of 35) of the sites received a score below 40 out of 100. The **Operations pillar** rating ranges from 11 to 50.

- On the whole, Philippine news sites performed worst in the areas of *Attribution*, *Ensuring accuracy*, *Funding*, and *Ownership* transparency.

Because of the disparity between the sites' scores in the Content and Operations pillars, the opportunity for improving disinformation risk ratings lies in establishing and publishing policies that ensure the editorial integrity of news sites.

- To address low scores on *Attribution*, news sites should set and publish policies regarding articles' sources and bylines.

- To improve scores on *Ensuring accuracy*, news sites must set and publish policies for pre-publication fact-checking and post-publication error correction.

- To improve risk ratings in terms of *Funding* and *Ownership* transparency, news sites must disclose their sources of funding and revenue, as well as the persons and/or legal entities that own and manage their organisations.

The Philippine media market:
Key features and scope

Operating in the oldest democracy in Asia, the media in the Philippines are among the freest and liveliest in the region. Filipino journalists observe a long tradition of serving as the country's 'Fourth Estate.' They are watchdogs for public interests and regularly scrutinise the exercise of government power.[2]

Despite their fundamental role, Philippine media face emerging challenges to their contemporary significance in the era of digital media. Overall trust in mainstream news among Filipinos continues to be among the lowest, both globally and in Asia, despite recent improvements.[3] In 2022, only around 32% of Filipinos said they trust the news most of the time.[4]

Television is the top source of news and entertainment for most Filipinos.[5] Radio has also traditionally been a popular source of news, especially in remote rural areas, although its share of the total audience has been consistently declining. In recent years, Filipinos have also been increasingly relying on the internet as a source of news, especially among younger demographics and in dense urban areas where internet penetration is highest. Growing consistently in the past years, about half of the population of 110 million currently gets news from the internet.[6] This share of the population primarily uses a range of social media platforms to get their news online: about seven out of ten use Facebook as a regular news source, six out of ten rely on YouTube, and around four out of ten use Facebook Messenger.[7] These are unsurprising developments considering that the country is dubbed the "social media capital of the world" and a "mobile-first market."[8] In the latest

estimates, there are about 92 million social media users in the Philippines, more than 83 million of whom are active on Facebook, 57 million on YouTube, and 36 million on TikTok.[9] Filipinos also enjoy a comparably high degree of internet freedom, especially when compared to some of their neighbours in Asia.[10]

As Filipinos increasingly turn to the internet for their news, a wide array of media outlets are migrating online. GMA Network, which is currently the country's largest broadcast network, is also now the largest Philippine news organisation on TikTok. ABS-CBN, formerly the country's largest broadcast corporation, invested almost US$ 10 million in digital content production in 2022. This shift to digital was prompted by the Philippine Congress' refusal to renew the license for their network of free-to-air radio and television stations in 2020. Amidst these changes, print news media often struggle to retain their readership. Newspaper circulation in the Philippines has been historically low, and now only about 3% of Filipinos read newspapers regularly.[11] Print media are strategizing to get a share of the online media market by improving their digital presence, especially the major national and regional newspapers. For instance, the growth of the country's newspaper of record, Philippine Daily Inquirer, is now driven by its digital version, Inquirer.net.

With its young and digitally savvy population, the Philippine digital economy currently contributes as much as 10% to the country's GDP.[12] In 2021, digital transactions amounted to more than US$ 32 billion.[13] Digital ad spending is also growing consistently – it is projected to reach US$ 1.33 billion in 2022, making the Philippines among the top four markets in Southeast Asia.[14] As much as 40% of these revenues come from social media, with the average ad spending per user amounting to US$ 6.28 in 2022.[15]

While most online news sites still rely on advertising, revenue from paid subscriptions is also an emerging business model. In 2021, revenue from paid online e-papers in the Philippines grew by as much as 25%, outperforming even those from Indonesia, Singapore, and Thailand.[16] In 2022, 19% of the population or about 20 million Filipinos say they now pay for online news.[17] Rappler, a popular online news site with paid subscription services, has recorded double digit increases in its revenues in the past three years, especially as its audience from the provinces and young Filipinos grows.[18]

However, the expanding online media market in the Philippines faces enduring inequities in internet access. While more than 76 million Filipinos have access to the internet (69%), more than half of the country's population are considered to be "internet-poor," as they cannot afford the minimum package of mobile internet coverage due to its high cost.[19] Most Filipino households rely on mobile internet and continue to be priced out of fixed broadband internet connections.[20] Low-income households, especially outside urban centres, use the internet less than once a day.[21] Aside from being among the world's most expensive, the internet in the Philippines is also among Southeast Asia's slowest.[22] The lack of competition among internet service providers contributes to poor internet services in the country. The duopoly of Globe Telecom and PLDT dominates the industry, leaving Filipinos with limited choices.

Duopolies are also established dynamics in the media industry. With a private sector-led media market, ABS-CBN Corporation and GMA Network dominate the industry in terms of both economic market power and audience reach, giving them unparalleled influence in shaping public opinion.[23] Despite a variety of existing media outlets, ownership of the Philippine media industry is concentrated among a few economic and political elite families such as the Belmonte, Lopez, and Yap families.[24] Five families on the 2022 Forbes list of the

Philippines' richest are involved in the media. Four of these families enriched themselves principally from their media companies.[25] Meanwhile, their media workers face low wages and poor working conditions, as journalists work long hours for little pay and under contracts with low job security.[26]

In this environment, online disinformation has become influential, insidious, and predominant in the country. About nine in every ten Filipinos now believe that "fake news" is a problem in the country.[27] Also, around 90% of Filipinos claim that they have been exposed to disinformation, with the internet and social media listed as the top sources.[28] Since the 2016 elections, disinformation in the country has grown into a full-blown industry, with top advertising and public relations agencies leading in making disinformation strategies more innovative, sophisticated and mainstream.[29]

State-sponsored disinformation is prevalent, based on narratives that are meant to spread government propaganda, vilify independent voices and opposition, and drown dissent.[30] Journalists, civil society and opposition leaders have been targeted by state-sponsored disinformation, which has also made it easier for critical journalists to be harassed, publicly shamed, and even killed.[31] In 2022, the Philippines was still named among the world's most dangerous countries for journalists.[32]

These are only a few of the current challenges and opportunities in the Philippine media landscape. On one hand, the global rise of digital platforms ushered in changes to the ways news is produced, distributed and consumed in the country. On the other, a diminishing space for press freedom, combined with persistent socio-economic inequalities, raised new barriers to public access to high-quality news, such as the proliferation of state-sponsored disinformation and the pressing "digital divide."

Disinformation risk ratings

This study looks specifically at a sample of 35 news websites in English, Tagalog, and Cebuano.

Market overview

The sample was defined based on the sites' reach (using each site's Alexa rankings) and relevance, with a mind to ensure geographic and language representation.

Table 1. Media sites assessed in the Philippines (in alphabetical order)

News outlet	Domain	News outlet	Domain
Abante	www.abante.com.ph	Interaksyon	www.interaksyon.philstar.com
ABS-CBN News	www.news.abs-cbn.com	Manila Bulletin	www.mb.com.ph
ANC	www.news.abs-cbn.com/anc	Manila Standard	www.manilastandard.net
Balita	www.balita.net.ph	Manila Times	www.manilatimes.net
Banat	www.philstar.com/banat	Minda News	www.mindanews.com
Bandera	www.bandera.inquirer.net	News 5	www.news.tv5.com.ph
Bohol Chronicle	www.boholchronicle.com.ph	One News PH	www.onenews.ph
Bombo Radyo	www.bomboradyo.com	Palawan News	www.palawan-news.com
Brigada News	www.brigadanews.ph	Panay News	www.panaynews.net
Bulgar Online	www.bulgaronline.com	Pang Masa	www.philstar.com/pang-masa
Business Mirror	www.businessmirror.com.ph	Philippine STAR	www.philstar.com
Business World Online	www.bworldonline.com	Pilipino Star Ngayon	www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon
Cebu Daily News	www.cebudailynews.inquirer.net	Rappler	www.rappler.com
CNN Philippines	www.cnnphilippines.com	Remate	www.remate.ph
Daily Tribune	www.tribune.net.ph	Sun Star	www.sunstar.com.ph
GMA News	www.gmanetwork.com	The Daily Guardian	www.dailyguardian.com.ph
Inquirer	www.inquirer.net	The Freeman	www.philstar.com/the-freeman
Inquirer Libre	www.libre.inquirer.net		

Source: Global Disinformation Index

Figure 1. Disinformation risk ratings by site
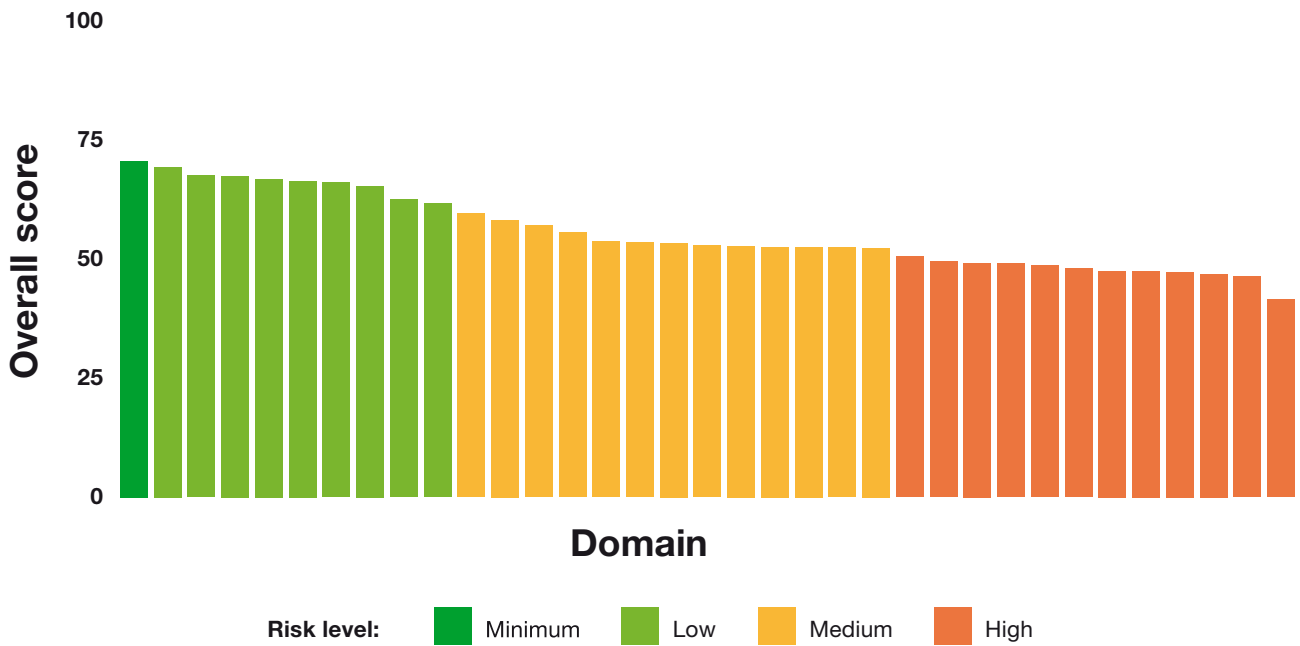
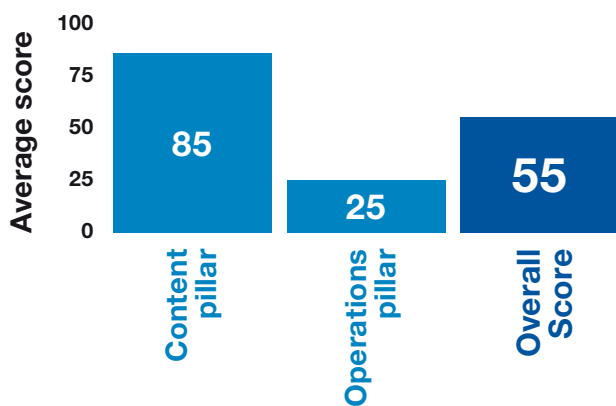

Source: Global Disinformation Index

The findings for the Philippines' media sites reveal a moderate level of disinformation risk, with the country average being 55.32. Overall, 25 of the 35 sites assessed (71.4%) scored below 60 out of 100. This group of sites has the greatest likelihood of reducing their disinformation risk going forward. No media site fell into the maximum-risk category, although 34.3% (12 of 35) of the sites have a high disinformation risk. In contrast, one news site received a minimum-risk rating, and 25.7% (9 out of 35) received a low-risk rating.

Across the different risk categories, the Philippine news sites were able to achieve an average score of 85 on the **Content pillar**, revealing a limited disinformation risk in relation to their content, and 25 on the **Operations pillar**, which highlights extensive vulnerabilities within their operations regarding disinformation risk. Most of the disinformation risk factors in the Philippine media market come from weak editorial checks and balances in their newsrooms. This suggests that significant improvements can be achieved by improving transparency about ownership and funding structure, clearer attribution practices, and stronger policies for ensuring accuracy — be they pre-publication fact-checking policies or error-correction guidelines (see Figures 1 and 2).

There is also sizable room for improvements in how content is presented and covered across the Philippine media market. To significantly lower the risks of disinforming readers, policies and practices surrounding the tone, titling, attribution, and coverage of specific stories must be given serious attention.

Figure 2. Overall market scores, by pillar

Source: Global Disinformation Index

In the Philippines, only one site received a minimum-risk rating with a score of 70 out of 100. This site performed well on all **Content** indicators (91 out of 100): its headlines were accurate and matched the tone of the article's content, the articles themselves were unbiased and neutral, and their visual presentation was largely neutral. On the other hand, it achieved an **Operations pillar** score of 50 out of 100, the highest **Operations pillar** score in the sample. Although this site has key policies in place, such as editorial principles and practices, it can still improve on transparency about its ownership structure and clarity about its user-generated comment policy.

Nine Philippine sites were rated as low-risk sites, with an average score of 65.67. Like the minimum-risk site, these sites performed well on the **Content** indicators, particularly for the lack of bias and sensational language in their articles, the neutrality of their visual presentation, and the accuracy of their headlines. Overall, their scores for the **Content pillar** averaged 90, indicating a very low

disinformation risk. **Operations** indicators, meanwhile, are where this group of sites can still improve, as these scores averaged 41.3 — highlighting a high level of disinformation risk. Though this group of sites performed relatively well in terms of comment policies, they can still improve transparency on their attribution policy, fact-checking and error correction policies, funding structure, and editorial principles and practices.

The largest group fell in the medium-risk category, with a total of 13 news sites and an average score of 54.08. These medium-risk sites also scored well on the **Content pillar**, with a relatively high average score of 87.9. These sites did especially well in terms of *Headline accuracy*, *Visual presentation*, *Byline information*, and lack of *Article bias*, although ratings for *Sensational language* displayed mixed values. Their performance on the **Operations pillar** pulled their scores down to an average of 20.53. Most sites in this category lacked clear comment policies, fact-checking and error correction policies, and attribution policies.

The remaining 12 sites — over one-third of the sample — received a high-risk rating, with an overall average score of 47.42. Despite their ratings, this group of news sites shows limited disinformation risk in terms of **Content** indicators, with an average score of 78.85. Many sites scored well in the *Visual presentation*, *Headline accuracy*, *Article bias* and *Byline information* indicators. Areas of improvement included *Lede present*, *Negative targeting* and *Common coverage*. Similarly to the other categories, news sites in the high-risk category had low ratings on **Operations** indicators, with an average score of 16.3. Although many sites had some form of editorial policies published, these were often vague. Comment policies, attribution policies, and fact-checking and error correction policies were largely absent (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Average pillar scores by site risk rating level
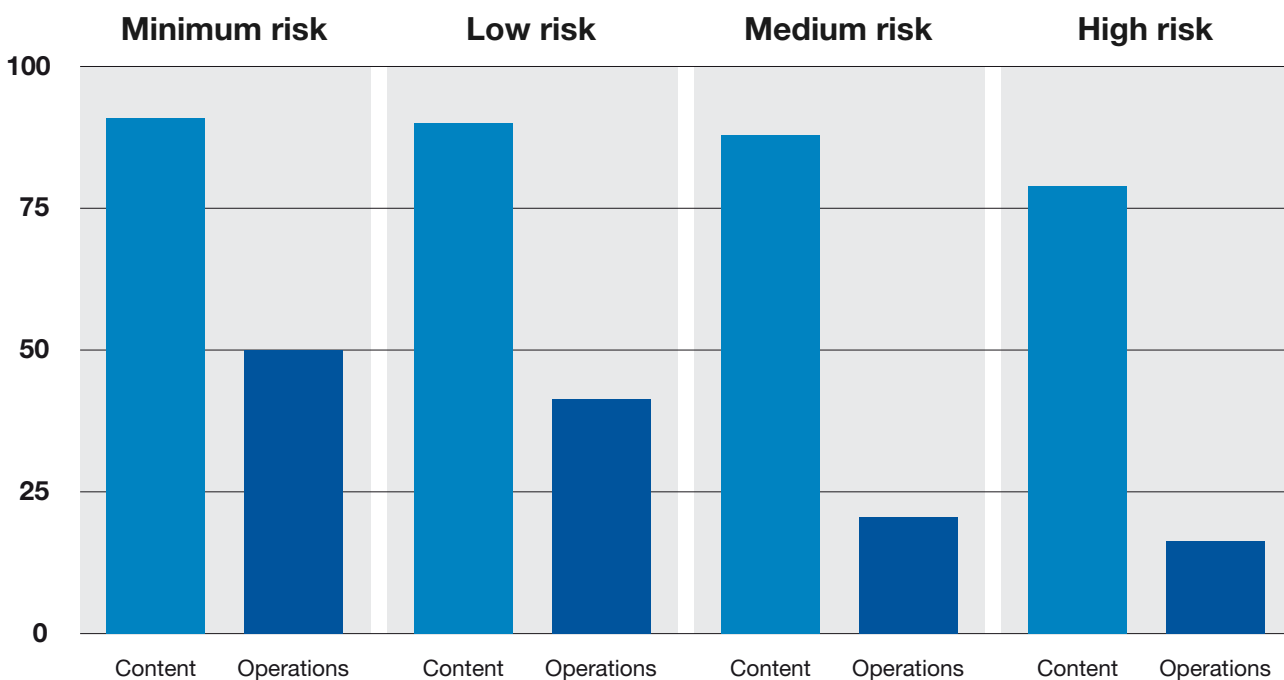
Source: Global Disinformation Index

# Pillar overview

Content pillar

The **Content pillar** focuses on the reliability of the content provided on the site. Analysis for this pillar is based on an assessment of twenty anonymised articles for each domain. These articles are drawn from the most frequently shared pieces of content during the data collection period and a sample of content pertaining to topics which present a disinformation risk, such as politics and health. All article scores are based on a scale of zero (worst) to 100 (best).

The average pillar score for the 35 sites included in the sample was 85 out of 100. All of the sites mostly performed well on almost all the indicators of the **Content pillar**. The score ranged from 93 to 68, and the best-performing sites in this pillar were: privately-run popular news sites with wide readership and reach, the online versions of the country's major and oldest national and regional newspapers' sites, online news sites of mainstream broadcast companies in the country, and young online-only news sites with strong reputations for critical, thorough, and prize-winning investigative journalism and news reporting.

Most of the sites present articles that use fairly neutral language and visual presentation and they report in a fair and balanced manner while rarely making use of negative targeting. Only one site scored below 70 in this pillar, as its content tends to be biased and often targets individuals, groups and institutions. The site belongs to Philippine tabloids, known for low-quality but entertaining content, including deliberately sensationalist crime stories and extremely dramatic or emotional headlines.

The *Article bias* indicator scored an average of 90 out of 100. This means that most of the sites avoided reporting in a misleading way. For instance, they avoided misrepresenting and omitting facts, and they tended to publish fair and balanced commentary or analysis. The *Negative targeting* indicator, although slightly under the pillar average, performed relatively well (84 out of 100). In fact, only a few sites occasionally resorted to negatively targeting specific individuals, groups and institutions. Additionally, the *Sensational language* and *Visual presentation* indicators scored 89 and 95, respectively. Philippine sites tended to refrain from using sensational language and visual elements to elicit the reader's emotionality.

Figure 4. Average Content pillar scores by indicator
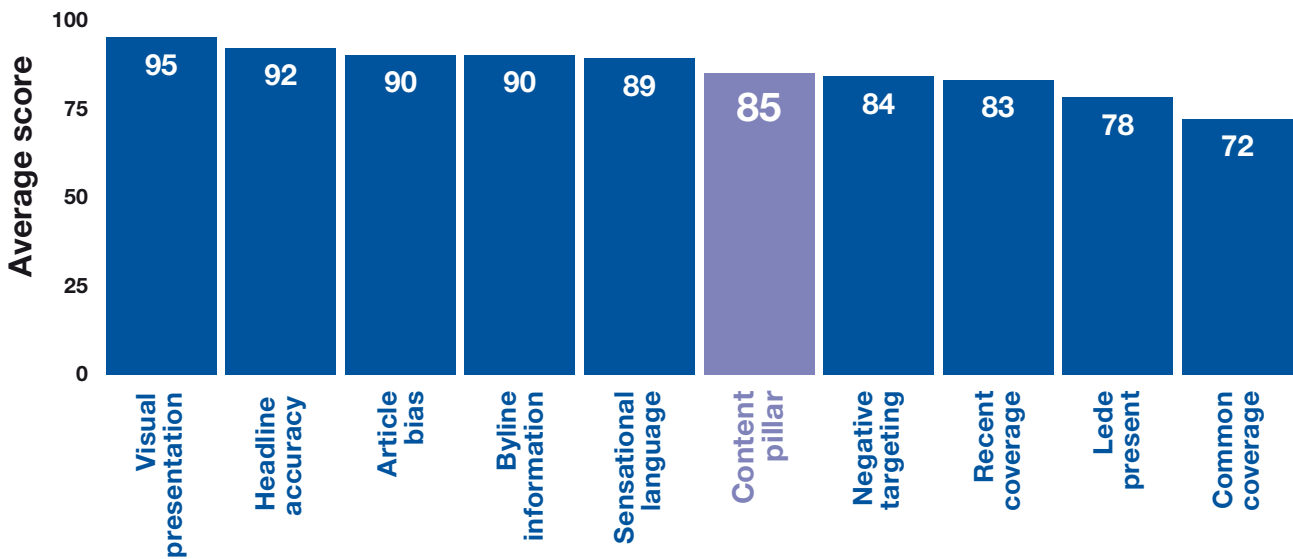
Source: Global Disinformation Index

Most Philippine sites almost consistently use accurate headlines and publish clear information about the authors of their articles, which are reflected by the scores of 92 and 90 on the *Headline accuracy* and *Byline information* indicators, respectively. The relatively high *Headline accuracy* indicator score might be especially relevant, as on social media, it has become less common for Filipinos to read the news beyond the headline, as this requires leaving the social media platform to read the entire story on the news site.

The worst-performing indicator in the **Content pillar** is the *Common coverage* indicator, which received a score of 72 out of 100. This means that the events covered by some sites were not necessarily covered by other reliable outlets, which might carry some disinformation risk. However, regional outlets, which fill the gap in news reporting among national outlets by covering regionally specific events, might have contributed to lower the score. The *Lede present* indicator also scored below the pillar average, with 78 out of 100. Philippine sites could improve their scores by consistently introducing the main facts covered in their articles before their reporting, commentary or analysis.

Figure 5. Content pillar scores by site

Source: Global Disinformation Index

Operations pillar

The **Operations pillar** assesses the operational and editorial integrity of a news site. All scores are based on a scale of zero (worst) to 100 (best), as scored by the country reviewers according to the information available on the site and elsewhere online. The **Operations** indicators are the quickest wins to reduce disinformation risk ratings, as they represent policies that domains can immediately establish and make public.

While the average score for the **Content pillar** was 85 (ranging from 68 to 93), the average score for the **Operations pillar** is much lower, i.e., 25 out of 100 (ranging from 11 to 50). Of the six **Operations** indicators, Philippine news sites performed strongest on the *Editorial principles and practices* indicator, with an average score of 42 out of 100. Some Philippine sites published a statement of editorial independence, along with other policies to ensure that factual information is reported without bias. However, only 2 sites out of 35 scored above 70, which suggests that most of the sites could improve their scores by adopting and publishing these policies on their websites.

The *Comment policies* indicator follows, with an average score of 32 out of 100. Most Philippine sites had insufficient or unclear policies to regulate and moderate the user-generated comment sections on their websites, as 24 sites scored below 21 in this indicator. This is a worrisome finding, as comment sections embody a democratic arena for exchanging

viewpoints, and may be exploited by disinformation actors if not properly regulated. Additionally, comments might shape or extend the news narrative for readers. Thus, a site's ability and willingness to moderate comments can affect public trust and confidence.[33] The *Ownership* and *Funding* indicators reached scores of 31 and 28 out of 100, respectively. This suggests that Philippine sites could improve the level of disclosure and diversification of their ownership and funding structure.

The Philippine news sites performed the worst on the *Attribution* and *Ensuring accuracy* indicators, where they gathered scores lower than the average **Operations pillar** score (11 and 8 out of 100, respectively). Although the majority of the sites (28 out of 35, or 80%) include some form of policy regarding the attribution of stories, facts, and media in their articles, they can improve their scores by disclosing more details about these attribution policies that ensure accurate stories and facts, and authentic media.

As for the *Ensuring accuracy* indicator, only 9 out of the 35 (25.71%) news sites included some details regarding their pre-publication fact-checking process and their post-publication error correction policies. The low score on this indicator suggests that most news sites are not transparent about the details of these processes and do not have clear channels to allow readers to flag errors in the articles. However, it does not necessarily mean that they do not have pre-publication or post-publication accuracy policies in place.

**Figure 6.** Average Operations pillar scores by indicator
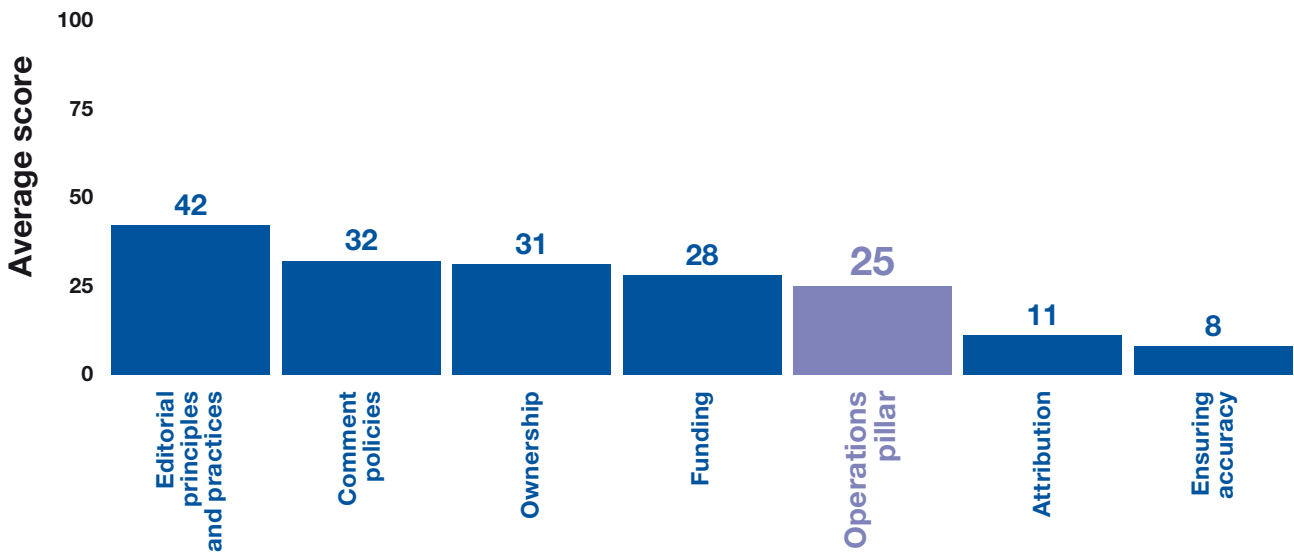
Source: Global Disinformation Index

Across the 35 news sites assessed in this report, the average score on the **Operations pillar** was 25. Around 40% of the news sites (14 out of the 35), including established broadsheets, radio stations, television stations and online news outlets, had

Operations pillar scores higher than the mean. Overall, these scores indicate a need for better transparency in operational and editorial policies, which is crucial in improving credibility and fostering public trust.

Figure 7. Operations pillar scores by site
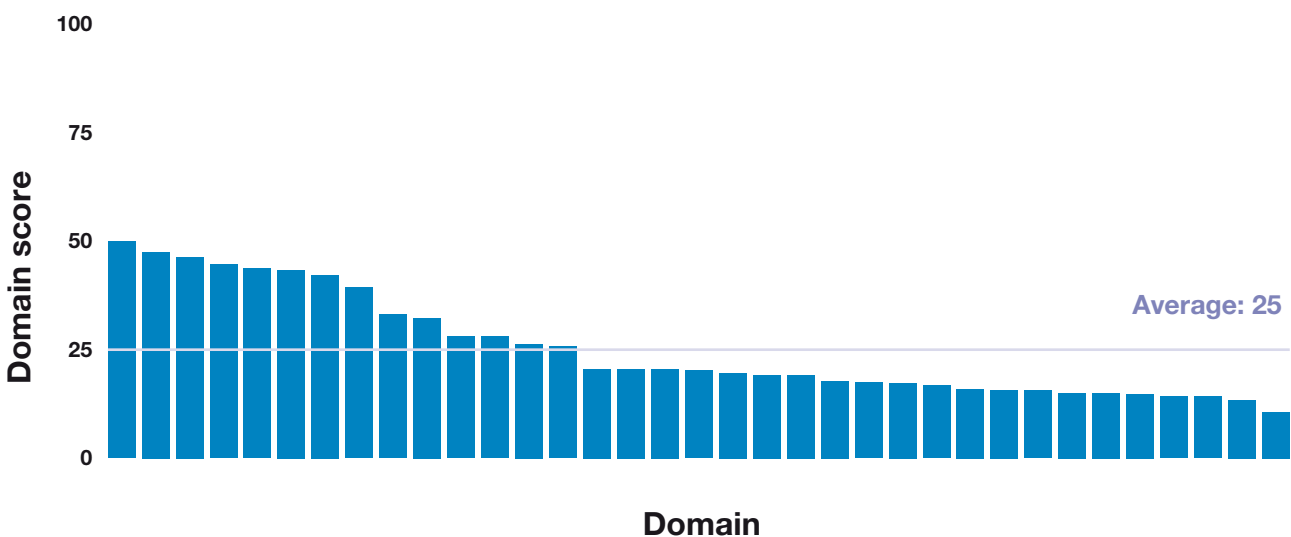
Source: Global Disinformation Index

Conclusion

Our assessment of news sites in the Philippines finds a moderate level of disinformation risk: 13 sites were evaluated as having a medium-risk of disinformation; while 10 sites were in the minimum-to-low risk range; and 12 were rated as high-risk.

A key finding is the noticeable disparity between the sites' scores on the **Content pillar** and the **Operations pillar**. This indicates that Philippine media sites tend to feature limited disinformation risk when it comes to their content. Generally, most of the disinformation risk stems from operational shortcomings, particularly in the areas of ensuring accuracy, attribution, funding and ownership transparency, and comment policies.

This finding also highlights opportunities to efficiently reduce disinformation risk ratings, as **Operations** indicators refer to policies that websites can easily publish on their websites. They could address these shortcomings by taking actions such as:

- Setting and publishing attribution policies

- Setting and publishing policies for pre-publication fact-checking and post-publication error correction processes;

- Setting and publishing policies for user-generated comments and content;

- Being more transparent about their ownership and funding structure; and

- Publishing a copy of their organisation's editorial standards and principles, which they may already be circulating internally but are not communicating externally. If they do not have them yet, they may refer to the Filipino Journalist's Code of Ethics.

Besides improvements in the newsroom practices and policies, in the Philippines there is the need for system-wide reforms to help the industry adapt to the unique demands of the digital era and combat its consequent challenges like online disinformation. Some of these reforms include the necessity to couple increased democratic access to media using the internet with accountability and transparency on the part of media players in the same medium and the obligation to secure appropriate pay and safe working conditions for journalists to ensure competence, dignity, and independence in the profession.

Appendix: Methodology

The Global Disinformation Index evaluates the level of disinformation risk of a country's online media market. The country's online media market is represented by a sample of 30 to 35 news domains that are selected on the basis of their Alexa rankings, their number of social media followers, and the expertise of local researchers. The resulting sample features major national news sites with high levels of online engagement, news sites that reflect the regional, linguistic and cultural composition of the country, and news sites that influence ideas among local decision-makers, groups or actors.

The index is composed of the **Content** and **Operations pillars**. The pillars are, in turn, composed of several indicators. The **Content pillar** includes indicators that assess elements and characteristics of each domain's content to capture its level of credibility, sensationalism, and impartiality. The **Operations pillar** indicators evaluate the policies and rules that a specific domain establishes to ensure the reliability and quality of the news being published. These policies concern, for instance, conflicts of interest, accurate reporting and accountability.

Each of GDI's media market risk assessments are conducted in collaboration with a local team of media and disinformation experts who develop the media list for the market sample, contribute to the sampling frame for the content included in the **Content pillar** review, conduct the data collection for the **Content** and **Operations pillars**, vet and interpret the index results, and draft the market report.

Site selection

The market sample for the study is developed based on a mix of quantitative and qualitative criteria. GDI begins by creating a list of the 50 news websites with the greatest traffic in the media market. This list is provided to the country research team, along with data on the number of Facebook and Twitter followers for each site, to gauge relevance and reach. The local research team then reduces the list to 35 sites, ensuring that the sample provides adequate geographic, linguistic and political coverage to capture the major media discourses in the market. International news outlets are generally excluded, because their risk ratings are assessed in the market from which they originate.[34] News aggregators are also excluded, so that all included sites are assessed on their original content. The final media market sample reflects the complete set of between 30 to 35 sites for which complete data could be collected throughout the review process.

Data collection

The **Content** indicators are based on the review of a sample of twenty articles published by each domain. Ten of these articles are randomly selected among a domain's most frequently shared articles on Facebook within a two-week period. The remaining ten articles are randomly selected among a group of a domain's articles covering topics that are likely to carry disinformation narratives. The topics, and the associated set of keywords used to identify them, are jointly developed by GDI and the in-country research team. Each country team contributes narrative topics and the keywords used to identify them in the local media discourse to GDI's global topic classifier list, developed by GDI's data science and intelligence teams. Country teams also manually verify the machine translation of the entire topic list in the relevant study languages.

The sampled articles are anonymised by stripping them of any information that allows the analysts to identify the publisher or the author of the articles. The anonymised content is reviewed by two country analysts who are trained on the GDI codebook. For each anonymised article, the country analysts answer a set of 13 questions designed to evaluate the elements and characteristics of the article and its headline, in terms of bias, sensationalism and negative targeting. The analysts subsequently review how the article is presented on the domain and the extent to which the domain provides information on the author's byline and timeline. While performing the **Content pillar** reviews, the analysts are required to provide a thorough explanation and gather evidence to support their decisions.

The **Operations pillar** is based on the information gathered during the manual assessment of each domain performed by the country analysts. The country analysts answer a set of 98 questions aimed at evaluating each domain's ownership, management and funding structure, editorial independence, principles and guidelines, attribution policies, error-correction and fact-checking policies, and rules and policies on the comments section. The analysts gather evidence to support their assessments as they perform each **Operations pillar** review.

Data analysis and indicator construction

The data gathered by the country analysts for the **Content pillar** are used to compute nine indicators. The **Content pillar** indicators included in the final risk rating are: *Headline accuracy*, *Byline information*, *Lede present*, *Common coverage*, *Recent coverage*, *Negative targeting*, *Article bias*, *Sensational language* and *Visual presentation*. For each indicator, values are normalised to a scale of 0 to 100. The domain-level score for each indicator in this pillar is the average score obtained across the ten articles. The pillar score for each domain is the average of all the scores for all of the pillar's indicators, and ranges from 0 to 100.

For the **Operations pillar**, the answers of the country analysts are translated into a set of sub-indicators. The six indicators are calculated as the averages of these sub-indicator scores. The resulting **Operations pillar** indicators are: *Attribution*, *Comment policies*, *Editorial principles & practices*, *Ensuring accuracy*, *Funding* and *Ownership*. For each indicator, values are normalised to a scale of 0 to 100. The domain score for the **Operations pillar** is the average score across indicators.

Table 2. Global Disinformation Index pillars and indicators

Pillar	Indicator	Sub-indicators	Unit of analysis	Definition	Rationale
Content	Headline accuracy	None	Article	Rating for how accurately the story's headline describes the content of the story	Indicative of clickbait
	Byline information			Rating for how much information is provided in the article's byline	Attribution of stories creates accountability for their veracity
	Lede present			Rating for whether the article begins with a fact-based lede	Indicative of fact-based reporting and high journalistic standards
	Common coverage			Rating for whether the same event has been covered by at least one other reliable local media outlet	Indicative of a true and significant event
	Recent coverage			Rating for whether the story covers a news event or development that occurred within 30 days prior to the article's publication date	Indicative of a newsworthy event, rather than one which has been taken out of context
	Negative targeting			Rating for whether the story negatively targets a specific individual or group	Indicative of hate speech, bias or an adversarial narrative
	Article bias			Rating for the degree of bias in the article	Indicative of neutral, fact-based reporting or well-rounded analysis
	Sensational language			Rating for the degree of sensationalism in the article	Indicative of neutral, fact-based reporting or well-rounded analysis
	Visual presentation			Rating for the degree of sensationalism in the visual presentation of the article	Indicative of neutral, fact-based reporting or well-rounded analysis
Operations	Attribution	None	Domain	Rating for the number of policies and practices identified on the site	Assesses policies regarding the attribution of stories, facts and media (either publicly or anonymously); indicative of policies that ensure accurate facts, authentic media and accountability for stories
	Comment policies	Policies		Rating for the number of policies identified on the site	Assesses policies to reduce disinformation in user-generated content
		Moderation		Rating for the mechanisms to enforce comment policies identified on the site	Assesses the mechanism to enforce policies to reduce disinformation in user-generated content
	Editorial principles and practices	Editorial independence		Rating for the number of policies identified on the site	Assesses the degree of editorial independence and the policies in place to mitigate conflicts of interest
		Adherence to narrative		Rating for the degree to which the site is likely to adhere to an ideological affiliation, based on its published editorial positions	Indicative of politicised or ideological editorial decision-making
		Content guidelines		Rating for the number of policies identified on the site	Assesses the policies in place to ensure that factual information is reported without bias
		News vs. analysis		Rating for the number of policies and practices identified on the site	Assesses the policies in place to ensure that readers can distinguish between news and opinion content
	Ensuring accuracy	Pre-publication fact-checking		Rating for the number of policies and practices identified on the site	Assesses policies to ensure that only accurate information is reported
		Post-publication corrections		Rating for the number of policies and practices identified on the site	Assesses policies to ensure that needed corrections are adequately and transparently disseminated
	Funding	Diversified incentive structure		Rating for the number of revenue sources identified on the site	Indicative of possible conflicts of interest stemming from over-reliance on one or few sources of revenue
		Accountability to readership		Rating based on whether reader subscriptions or donations are identified as a revenue source	Indicative of accountability for high-quality information over content that drives ad revenue
		Transparent funding		Rating based on the degree of transparency the site provides regarding its sources of funding	Indicative of the transparency that is required to monitor the incentives and conflicts of interest that can arise from opaque revenue sources
	Ownership	Owner-operator division		Rating based on the number of distinct executive or board-level financial and editorial decision-makers listed on the site	Indicative of a separation between financial and editorial decision-making, to avoid conflicts of interest
		Transparent ownership		Rating based on the degree of transparency the site provides regarding its ownership structure	Indicative of the transparency that is required to monitor the incentives and conflicts of interest that can arise from opaque ownership structures

Source: Global Disinformation Index

Risk ratings

The overall index score for each domain is the average of the pillar scores. The domains are then classified on the basis of a five-category risk scale based on the overall index score. The risk categories were defined based on the distribution of risk ratings from 180 sites across six media markets in September 2020.

This cross-country dataset was standardised to fit a normal distribution with a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1. The standardised scores and their distance from the mean were used to determine the bands for each risk level, given in Table 3. These bands are then used to categorise the risk levels for sites in each subsequent media market analysis.

Table 3. Disinformation risk levels

Risk level	Lower bound	Upper bound	Standard deviation
Minimum risk	69.12	100	> 1.5
Low risk	59.81	69.11	> 0.5 and ≤ 1.5
Medium risk	50.50	59.80	> -0.5 and ≤ 0.5
High risk	41.20	50.49	> -1.5 and ≤ -0.5
Maximum risk	0	41.19	≤ -1.5

Source: Global Disinformation Index

Endnotes

1   The GDI assessment framework is outlined in the annex of this report.

2   See: Jose Mari Hall Lanuza and Cleve V. Arguelles (2022). 'Media System Incentives for Disinformation: Exploring the Relationships Between Institutional Design and Disinformation Vulnerability'. In *Disinformation in the Global South*, edited by Herman Wasserman and Dani Madrid-Morales, pp. 123–139. WILEY-Blackwell.

3   See: https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2022.

4   See: https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2022/philippines.

5   See: https://pulseasia.ph/september-2021-nationwide-survey-on-news-sources-and-use-of-the-internet-social-media-and-instant-messaging-applications.

6   See: https://pulseasia.ph/september-2021-nationwide-survey-on-news-sources-and-use-of-the-internet-social-media-and-instant-messaging-applications; https://www.onenews.ph/articles/78-of-filipinos-get-their-news-from-facebook-ateneo-study; https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2022/philippines.

7   See: https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2022/philippines.

8   See: https://www.dti.gov.ph/archives/archived-speeches/speech-digital-convention-2021; https://www.thinkwithgoogle.com/intl/en-apac/collections/philippines.

9   See: https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-philippines.

10   See: https://freedomhouse.org/country/philippines/freedom-net/2022.

11   See: https://pulseasia.ph/september-2021-nationwide-survey-on-news-sources-and-use-of-the-internet-social-media-and-instant-messaging-applications.

12   See: https://psa.gov.ph/digital-economy/node/168286.

13   See: https://psa.gov.ph/digital-economy/node/168286; https://alphabeta.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/philippines-economic-impact-report.pdf.

14   See: https://www.statista.com/outlook/dmo/digital-advertising/philippines#ad-spending.

15   See: https://www.statista.com/outlook/dmo/digital-advertising/philippines#ad-spending.

16   See: https://www.statista.com/outlook/dmo/digital-media/epublishing/philippines.

17   See: https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2022/philippines#_ftn4.

18   See: https://www.rappler.com/about/rappler-ends-pandemic-year-with-income-posts-growth-in-regions.

19   See: https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2022-philippines; https://internetpoverty.io.

20   See: https://pidswebs.pids.gov.ph/CDN/PUBLICATIONS/pidsdps2120.pdf.

21   See: https://pulseasia.ph/september-2021-nationwide-survey-on-news-sources-and-use-of-the-internet-social-media-and-instant-messaging-applications.

22   See: https://surfshark.com/dql2020-slides.pdf; https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/12/28/2066612/philippines-internet-second-slowest-asean-ranks-110th-worldwide.

23   See: https://philippines.mom-rsf.org.

24   See: https://philippines.mom-rsf.org/en/owners.

25   See: https://www.forbes.com/lists/philippines-billionaires/?sh=2e9db78044e5.

26   See: https://www.ifj.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Underneath_the_Autocrats_-_IFJ_SEAJU_2018_-_SP_HR.pdf.

27 See: https://pulseasia.ph/updates/september-2022-nationwide-survey-on-fake-news.

28 See: https://pulseasia.ph/updates/september-2022-nationwide-survey-on-fake-news.

29 See: https://newtontechfordev.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/ARCHITECTS-OF-NETWORKED-DISINFORMATION-FULL-REPORT.pdf; https://www.newmandala.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Digital-Disinformation-2019-Midterms.pdf; https://mediamanipulation.org/sites/default/files/media-files/Parallel-Public-Spheres.pdf; Jose Mari Hall Lanuza and Cleve V. Arguelles (2022). 'Media System Incentives for Disinformation: Exploring the Relationships Between Institutional Design and Disinformation Vulnerability'. In *Disinformation in the Global South*, edited by Herman Wasserman and Dani Madrid-Morales, pp. 123–139. WILEY-Blackwell.

30 Ibid.

31 See: https://rsf.org/en/country/philippines.

32 See: https://cpj.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/CPJ_2022-Global-Impunity-Index.pdf.

33 See: https://mediaengagement.org/research/attacks-in-the-comment-sections.

34 In select cases, international news outlets may be included in a study if the domestic market is small, the sites are considered highly relevant, the content on the site is specific to the market assessed, and GDI has not developed a risk rating for that site elsewhere.